

Memory is not like a tape recording essay sample



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Memory is an essential feature to humans and all other living organisms. Practically all of our daily activities – talking, understanding, reading, and socializing – depend on stored information about our surroundings.

Our memory has an incredible capacity for storage, but our mind needs to be very selective in what it remembers. Human brain needs to be able to combine past knowledge and new upcoming information as well as being able to remember tasks and characteristics. For that reason it cannot be said that memory stores the arrival information like a tape recorder.

According to Atkinson & Shiffrin's modal model of memory (1971), our memory is constituted of three storage areas: sensory store, short-term store and long-term store (Albery et al, 2004). Our sensory store collects an input that is sent to the short-term store. If the input is by some means rehearsed within 18 seconds, part of these information would be able go into the long-term store.

Atkinson & Shiffrin built on Miller's theory of the magical seven, where is said that 7+/- pieces of information can be rehearsed at once (Styles, 2005). Thus if memory was acting as a tape recorder it would remember more than just the magic seven. Additionally, there would be no need of any kind of rehearsal in order to keep all the information input.

Baddeley (1998) thought that Atkinson & Shiffrin's idea was too simple because the processes by which the information was categorised and stored was not taking into account. He came up with the idea of Working Memory.

Working memory is a term used to cover up all components of short time memory and the attention control required to hold, rehearse, and manipulate the information while other processes work on it (Andrade, 2001). Baddeley identified different components within our memory: a central executive that supervises the overall process and two subcomponents for phonological and visuospatial meaning. Therefore, if we are watching someone giving an oral presentation we are not recording every single piece of information given. Our phonological loop and visuospatial pad are retaining the speech base sound and making a mental representation of colour shape and distance respectively (Andrade, 2001).

Craik & Lockhart (1972) proposed that the resilience of memory was related to the depth of processing (Albery et al, 2004). In other words, they considered that the emphasis should be made on the depth of processing rather than the rehearsal. They differentiated between shallow and deep processing.

In Craik & Lockhart Levels of processing experiment's it is verified that memory is not able to remember all the words that have been exposed to but those that required some deep semantic process. Then again it cannot be said that memory can keep a hold of them like a tape recorder unless they had a significant meaning. According to Hasher & Zacks (1984) sometimes, memory can recall information by accident by automatic processing (Albery et al, 2004).

The levels of processing theory can as a result demonstrate the efficiency of deep processing in memory retrieval. This will also determine whether the input will be stored in long-term memory for further access.

Tulving focused his study on what kind of information was stored in the long-term memory. He identified two types of information those being implicit and explicit memory (Schacter, 2003).

Implicit or procedural memory can be defined as memory to do things. Implicit memory does not have conscious access to memory or stored knowledge. The message stored in the procedural memory is coded and that explains why is so difficult to teach someone to do something mechanical.

Explicit or declarative memory has the need for conscious recollection in order to remember information. Explicit memory is subdivided in semantic and episodic memory (Schacter, 2003).

Semantic memory stores factual kind like vocabulary and concepts like what is the meaning of war.

Episodic memory relates to specific times and places like your 18th birthday.

At an exam, the students try to recollect the information they had learned and revised. They may try to use both semantic and episodic memory in order to access meaning of words or recall an exercise they undertook at last week's tutorial. Once more, the fact that memory is not like tape recording comes to place. Students cannot recall every example from the lecture neither they can access all the organised knowledge.

Some scientists think that our memory does retain all the information but it cannot recall it all. An understanding of memory is an understanding of the role it plays in our life and how we are all conditioned by its work.

In the words of Friedrich Nietzsche, ' the existence of forgetting has never been proved: we only know that some times things don't come to mind when we want them.'